



**For Immediate Release on October 19, 2004 Contacts: Pete Anderson, 775-684-2500
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Waterfall Fire Accident Investigation Report Released Today

Carson City, Nevada...On July 14, 2004, in the early hours of suppressing the Waterfall Fire near Carson City, Nevada, 18 vehicles and 21 people were trapped by the fire. Fortunately, no severe personal injuries occurred in this incident. However, three vehicles were destroyed by the fire. Because of the potential for serious injuries, Nevada Division of Forestry, Carson City Fire Department and the USDA Forest Service convened an Accident Investigation Team and a Board of Review. The team's composition is listed in this release's sixth paragraph.

The Board of Review today accepted the findings of the Waterfall Fire Accident Investigation Team and made recommendations to prevent future accidents. The Board of Review report, including the Accident Investigation Team report, can be found on the internet at the Nevada Division of Forestry's home page, <http://www.forestry.nv.gov> and the USDA Forest Service Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest's home page, <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/htnf/>.

The Accident Investigation Team report documents the extreme burning conditions experienced on July 14 and the aggressive suppression response by multiple agencies. The Board of Review found the complexity of the incident in the early hours of the fire contributed to the burn-over. The Board suggested several follow-up actions, including the development of a common interagency operating plan for the Sierra Front Wildfire Cooperators. This plan will clarify issues of leadership and organization, particularly in incidents that involve multiple agencies in the wildland-urban interface, or where the homes meet the Forest.

"Nevada Division of Forestry has a long history of suppressing wildland fires," Pete Anderson, State Forester-Firewarden, said. "By instituting the recommendations of the Board of Review, Nevada will take additional steps to provide for the safety of our firefighters and the public during wildland fires."

"The Forest Service is committed to working with our wildland fire partners to make changes in the way we fight wildfires, improve safety and prevent accidents," Humboldt-Toiyabe Forest Supervisor Bob Vaught said. "I accept the recommendations of the Board of Review and will work with the Sierra Front Wildfire Cooperators to implement the recommended changes."

The five-member Board of Review was chaired by Eldorado Forest Supervisor John Berry. Members included Nevada State Forester Pete Anderson, Carson City Fire Chief Lou Buckley, Humboldt-Toiyabe Deputy Forest Supervisor Ed Monnig, and Forest Service Wildland Fire Safety Manager Steve Holdsambeck.

For further information on this release, contact Pete Anderson, Nevada State Forester-Firewarden at 775-684-2500 or Mike Dondero, Chief of Fire & Aviation, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest at 775- 355-5315.

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